



October 31, 2014

Susan Miller Barker
Executive Director
Charter Schools Institute
State University of New York
41 State Street, Suite 700
Albany, NY 12207

Dear Ms. Miller Barker:

I am writing on behalf of the Board of Trustees (the "Board") of Success Academy Charter Schools – NYC to request a non-material revision to the charter of Success Academy Charter School NYC 1 (the "School").¹ After considering a variety of factors, the Board and staff have determined to move the School within the same borough of Manhattan, from Community School District ("CSD") 2 to CSD 1. Accordingly, the Board seeks to amend the School's charter to serve CSD 1.

Within CSD 1, there is a critical need for additional high quality educational options. Overall, the majority of students in grades 3-8 in the district failed the 2014 state exams (63% in English Language Arts ["ELA"], 59% in math).² Out of 25 elementary/middle schools in the district, only 4 have a majority of students reading on grade level, and only 5 have a majority of students proficient in math.³ At 3 out of the district's 6 high schools, the college readiness rate is below 20%; at 2 of those 3 high schools, the college readiness rate is below 10%.⁴

Additionally, profound achievement gaps plague CSD 1: 72% of white students in the district passed the 2014 math exam, compared to 21% of Hispanic students and 20% of African American students in the district.⁵ Similarly, white students in the CSD passed the 2014 ELA exam at a rate that was 59 percentage points higher than African American students and 55 percentage points higher than Hispanic students.⁶ Too many historically disadvantaged children residing in CSD 1 are not receiving the high-quality education they deserve.

¹ The School's charter was approved by the Board of Trustees of the State University of New York ("SUNY") on October 8, 2014.

² Based on New York City Department of Education ("DOE") test score data, *available at* <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/data/TestResults/ELAandMathTestResults>.

³ Based on New York City DOE test score data.

⁴ Based on New York City DOE Progress Report results, *available at* <http://schools.nyc.gov/Accountability/tools/report/default.htm>.

⁵ Based on New York City DOE test score data.

⁶ Based on New York City DOE test score data.

Success Academy schools have an established track record of helping all students achieve at exceptional levels, regardless of their background. In 2014, 94% of Success Academy students in testing grades (over 80% of whom qualified for Free and Reduced Price Lunch) passed the math exam, compared to 35% of students citywide. Nearly two-thirds (64%) of Success Academy students passed the ELA exam, compared to 29% of students citywide. The same high level of student achievement holds among students from traditionally disadvantaged backgrounds as well. For example, the vast majority of African American students at Success Academy passed the 2014 exams (94% vs. 19% of African American students citywide in math, and 62% vs. 19% of African American students citywide in ELA). 82% of students with disabilities at Success Academy passed the 2014 math exam, compared to 9% of students with disabilities statewide. The passage rate for English Language Learners at Success Academy was 91% in Math and 41% in ELA, compared to 11% and 3% (respectively) of their peers across the state. Notably, students with disabilities at Success Academy were twice as likely to pass the 2014 math exam as students without disabilities statewide (82% versus 41%). Similarly, English Language Learners at Success Academy were more likely to pass the 2014 exams than students across the state who have never been English Language Learners (91% vs. 38% in Math, and 41% vs. 33% in ELA).⁷

This level of academic success means that Success Academy schools have not just closed the achievement gap, they have reversed it. On the 2014 state exams, African American and Hispanic students at Success Academy outperformed white and Asian students in New York City in both math and ELA. Nearly all African American and Hispanic students (94% and 96% respectively) at Success Academy passed the math exam, compared to 68% of Asian students and 58% of white students citywide. 62% of African American students and 67% of Hispanic students at Success Academy met the standards for proficiency on the ELA exam, compared to 52% of Asian students and 50% of white students citywide. At Success Academy, African American and Hispanic children are excelling at unprecedented levels.⁸

As a result of these outcomes, demand for a Success Academy school in CSD 1 is very high. In 2014, despite the fact that Success Academy does not currently have a school in the district, Success Academy received hundreds of unique applications from families living in CSD 1. Moreover, based on the community outreach we have conducted in CSD 1, almost 2,000 community members signed petitions in support of our opening a school in CSD 1. This number of petitioners continues to grow as we spend time within the district listening to community voices.

Success Academy has also engaged in further (and continues to pursue) community outreach to determine the level of support in CSD 1. We have canvassed neighborhoods, distributed flyers in public housing complexes and supermarkets, posted advertisements in city and neighborhood publications, mailed letters to community leaders and elected officials, and provided updated detailed information online. Through our website, we continue to solicit community input, and our flyers and advertisements provide an email address at which the public can contact us. (Please see attached representative copies of the letters, flyers, and

⁷ Based on New York City DOE test score data, and on New York State Education Department test score data, available at <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/irs/pressRelease/20140814/home.html>.

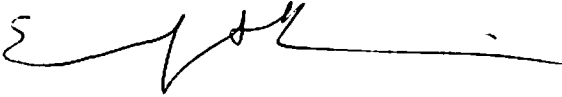
⁸ Based on New York City DOE test score data.

advertisements distributed and the petitions we received.) We reached out to several public leaders. We welcome and carefully consider all input from the community.

We are overwhelmed by this demand, continue to engage with the community, and are excited to open a school that will provide a much-needed quality educational opportunity for the families of CSD 1.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Emily A. Kim', written over a horizontal line.

Emily A. Kim
Chief Legal Officer